

## Safety Meeting Ergonomics



Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Injuries from manual material handling, especially strains and sprains of the back, arms and shoulders, are the most frequent cause of industrial insurance claims. The major cause of these injuries is unnecessary or excessive body motions while bending, twisting and reaching. In many cases, these strains and sprains can be easily prevented. The following are a few techniques for you to consider.

### **Bending:**

Many work tasks in industry involve unnecessary bending, which results from the improper design of the work station, a poor job layout, or inadequate or unavailable material handling equipment. The work station or area should be designed so the work is performed in the mid-range of the body, i.e., from waist to shoulder height within a 16" semicircle in front of the body.

Often this can be accomplished simply by placing a table under the material being worked on, raising the work level so it can be performed in an upright position. Stacking pallets beneath materials can also raise the work level to the mid-range. The use of a load leveling devices such as a lift table, work dispenser or other similar mechanical aid will also accomplish this goal. If the work level cannot be changed, sometimes lowering the employee, such as in the grease pit of a garage, will accomplish the goal of bringing the task into the mid-range of the body.

### **Twisting and Reaching:**

Elimination of unnecessary twisting or reaching can also be accomplished by finding ways to keep the work or materials in the mid-range. For example, while changing a light bulb or working above floor level, place the ladder so that the task will be performed in front of the body instead of twisting to the side. This demonstrates how easy it can be to minimize or eliminate many twisting or reaching tasks.

Providing adequate work space so the whole body can turn, instead of just the upper torso, is another good technique. For example, if a pallet of material must be placed behind the worker, provide enough room so that the employee must take one or two steps when moving material. When the pallet of material is placed close to and directly behind the work station, the tendency is to twist around to pick up the material. Turning the whole body is safest for the back.

Make a list of tasks the employees perform outside of the mid-range of the body and then list simple solutions that will eliminate the unnecessary bending and reaching. The most creative and practical ideas will probably come from the employees who handle the materials-so everyone should get involved with identifying both the problems and the solutions.

### Employee Signatures

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